Claims

1. *(Currently amended)* A data recording disk drive comprising:

a housing;

at least one disk rotatable about an axis of rotation;

a motor attached to the housing for rotating the disk;

a plate fixed to the housing, the plate extending circumferentially around a sector of the disk and radially across a radially outer annular region of the disk, the plate having a substantially planar surface facing a disk surface, ~~the axial spacing between the plate's surface and the disk's surface varying along the radial extent of the plate~~ said plate surface having a plurality of discrete surface features arranged in a pattern of radially-spaced concentric rings, each ring comprising a plurality of discrete spaced-apart surface features.

2. *(Currently amended)* The disk drive of claim 1 wherein there is only one disk, wherein the housing includes a base, the motor and disk being mounted on the base, and wherein the plate is part of the base and said plate surface faces~~, whereby the base has a surface facing~~ the bottom surface of the disk.

3. *(Currently amended)* The disk drive of claim 1 wherein there is only one disk, wherein the housing includes a base, the motor and disk being mounted on the base, and wherein the plate is part of the cover and said plate surface faces~~, whereby the cover has a surface facing~~ the top surface of the disk.

4. *(Currently amended)* A data recording disk drive comprising:

a housing;

a rotatable stack of disks axially spaced along a common axis of rotation;

a motor attached to the housing for rotating the disk stack;

a plate fixed to the housing and located between two axially adjacent disks, the plate extending circumferentially around a sector of the two disks and radially across a radially outer annular region of the two disks, the plate having a substantially planar first surface facing a surface of a first disk and a substantially planar second surface facing a surface of the second disk, ~~the axial spacing between the plate's first surface and the surface of the first disk varying along the radial extent of the plate~~ said first and second plate surfaces each having a plurality of discrete surface features arranged in a pattern of radially-spaced concentric rings, each ring comprising a plurality of discrete spaced-apart surface features.

5. *(Original)* The disk drive of claim 4 further comprising a plurality of plates, each plate being located between a different set of two axially adjacent disks.

Claims 6-9 inclusive: *(Canceled)*

10. *(Currently amended)* The disk drive of claim ~~9~~ 4 wherein the surface features are dimples.

11. *(Canceled)*

12. *(Currently amended)* The disk drive of claim ~~9~~ 4 wherein the surface features are bumps.

Claims 13-24 inclusive: *(Canceled)*